

In closing, let me say I am always struck by how every challenge in American education has been solved by somebody somewhere. Therefore, I am always frustrated that we have not yet found a way to make sure when somebody somewhere solves a problem, we cannot model that and make sure it's solved by everybody everywhere. That is one of the things that the AFT has been devoted to: finding what works, developing a systematic approach, trying to get it done everywhere. And it's one thing America needs desperately in this area of school discipline, school order, and school safety.

Again, I say I am very proud to be your partner in building a 21st century America that is leading the world to peace and freedom and prosperity, an America in which every child is

a responsible citizen with unparalleled opportunity, in a community that reveals in its diversity but is bound together in our wonderful ongoing effort to form a more perfect Union.

You, the educators of our Nation, are the architects of that 21st century America. Build well.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Marc H. Morial of New Orleans; Edward J. McElroy, secretary-treasurer, American Federation of Teachers; and Edith Shanker, former AFT President Albert Shanker's widow.

## Remarks at a Luncheon for Representative William J. Jefferson in New Orleans

July 20, 1998

Thank you so much, Congressman, Senator Landrieu, Mr. Mayor, Lieutenant Governor Blanco, members of the city council, the Jefferson Parish Council, and let me thank all of you for coming. If Al Gore were giving this speech, he would say thank you for the standing ovation. [*Laughter*] I think it's a pretty good joke, too, but I can never bear to give it without giving him some credit for it. [*Laughter*]

I want to say also to Andrea and to the Jefferson daughters and to their vast families over there, they could even elect Bill to Congress, they have so many in their families. [*Laughter*]

Let me thank all of you for coming. Let me once again not miss an opportunity to thank the people of Louisiana for supporting Hillary and me and the Vice President and our team twice, for dramatically increasing our margin in 1996, and for electing Mary Landrieu to the Senate. I thank you for all that.

I have so many rich and wonderful memories of this city. I first came here when I was about 4 years old, and I still remember at least one thing that happened then, when my mother was in nurse's training here—I maybe even was younger. I must have been younger; I must have been about 2½. But I still remember leaving on the train, and I still remember being on

the top floor of the Jung Hotel. And I don't remember much else, but whatever happened, I was bit, and I've been coming back ever since.

I want to tell you that I am honored to be here for your Congressman. I remember when Bill and Andrea had me in their home early in 1992. I remember well the meeting that John Lewis and Mike Espy and he had with me and their early commitment, which meant a great deal. I remember in the Democratic primary in Louisiana, 69 percent of the voters voted for me against a rather wide array of choices that they had. You don't forget things like that, and I'll always be grateful.

But I also want you to know that Mr. Jefferson here, while we rag each other a lot and make a lot of fun of each other and have had an enormously good time knowing each other, is a truly gifted and extraordinary public servant. He has the necessary blend of education and intelligence and practical sense. He is a visionary who wants to get things done. He knows what to be serious about and not to take himself too seriously. And I can tell you that once he makes up his mind to do something, he is absolutely dogged.

I don't know how many people there are in this audience that he has personally talked to

me about some issue or another that you were interested in and involved in, committed to. But I am especially grateful to him for his support for education and the education initiatives that we have put before the American people—his family is the living embodiment of that commitment—and for his support for economic expansion through trade. I think the people of New Orleans understand, without regard to party, that if we're going to keep growing our economy and lifting incomes and finding more for more people to do, since we're only 4 percent of the world's people and we enjoy 20 percent of the world's wealth, we have to sell some more to the other 96 percent of the world out there. And I am very grateful for his support on those issues.

I can also tell you he's done a great job with this Africa trade bill, which I think represents an enormous opportunity for America in the years ahead, both in economic opportunity and in opportunity to build friendships and partnerships in a part of the world that too many of

our people have ignored for too long, which is very, very important to the future of the globe.

Hillary and I had a wonderful trip to Africa not very long ago, and Bill went on the trip, and he did you proud. You would have been very, very proud of that.

So for all those reasons, I am here for my old friend, for a gifted public servant, for a supporter of the things that I believe in are right for America in the 21st century. I'm glad you're taking good care of him, and I hope you always will, because he sure takes good care of you.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:43 p.m. in the Imperial Ballroom at the Fairmont Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Marc H. Morial of New Orleans; Lt. Gov. Kathleen Blanco of Louisiana; Representative Jefferson's wife, Andrea; and former Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy.

## Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in New Orleans July 20, 1998

Thank you. Now you shamed me, and I can no longer make fun of you—[laughter]—Sheriff Lee. What he was afraid is I was going to say that he had offered to take me hunting and take you, and he said that he would provide the game. [Laughter] And I said, if you took me, you'd all be safe because I'd be blamed for it, no matter what happened. It would be great. [Laughter]

Let me say, I'd better get out of town because I'm really beginning to enjoy myself here and—[laughter]—and you know, it's just been wonderful.

First of all, let me thank a lot of the people who are here. I want to thank Len Barrack who came up here before me. I know most of you don't know him, but he is a Philadelphia lawyer and a gentleman and wonderful human being. Like Congressman and Mrs. Jefferson, he has five great children, and like Congressman Jefferson, he overmarried. You can't imagine—here's a guy with a busy life and a lot to do, and he could be home in Philadelphia. And

every night he's somewhere else in America trying to help rebuild our party and make sure we're victorious in November. And I thank you. Thank you very much.

I never want to speak again in Louisiana without thanking the people of this State for voting for me twice for President and voting for me overwhelmingly in the primary in 1992 and giving me the chance to serve. And it is a real joy to me to see you doing so well and to see the young leaders coming in.

I can tell you would be very, very proud of the mark that Mary Landrieu is making, not only from what you know here in Louisiana, but if you were in Washington and you heard it the way I hear it from the Senators, they believe that she is a fine Senator with an unlimited future, and so do I.

And I can't say enough about your mayor. New Orleans is getting a national reputation for saving its children, for putting its economy back in order, for showing the right face to the world,